ELK • DEER • CATTLE

A REVIEW OF RANCHING/WILDLIFE CONFLICTS IN THE EAST KOOTENAY REGION OF B.C.

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

MINISTER OF STATE
KOOTENAY DEVELOPMENT REGION

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I INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Agriculture, Forestry and Wildlife in the East Kootenay is one of long standing.

Many reports have been commissioned and published by various ministries over the years. Most of these reports deal with specific parts of the conflict. Some attempt to deal with the overall problem. For example, DeMarchi, Berry, Milroy - 1971 mentions an "integrated land use plan".

The 1985 Bowden report found through interviews that about seventy ranches had serious wildlife damage. DeMarchi and Bedford 1979 reported that damages to crops by elk was estimated at $1,500.00 per ranch, average.

Most ranchers I spoke to did not consider a single solution adequate. They also stated they were prepared to accept a level of damage by wildlife. That level cannot be determined with accuracy. It must be estimated. I believe it to be about $1,000 per year.

The value of wildlife is estimated to be quite high (Reid 1987). The business community throughout the East Kootenay reaps most of the benefit from money spent by users of wildlife. This amount in 1987 dollars (Reid 1988) for the East Kootenay was $8,572,120 spent by resident hunters. The amount for deer and elk only was $7,558,130.

This economic impact must be seriously considered when evaluating the solutions to this conflict.

The ministers responsible for tourism and for recreation have not been involved financially. It appears that activities relating to wildlife are recreation and they impact heavily on tourism. Therefore, these ministries should be involved in some financial way.

If the government considers wildlife a valuable resource that is a benefit to all people, it must accept responsibility for wildlife damage by instituting and funding a wildlife damage program.

II ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When this project started in September, I had some periferal knowledge of the subject but did not know any of the players. Due to the limited time, it was necessary to solicit as much assistance as possible.

The willingness to provide assistance and documentation was at times overwhelming. No one refused help. Every person I contacted provided the information requested. The welcome reception received on ranches and the time provided to me by ranchers was greatly appreciated.

I wish to recognize and thank the following people and organizations:

East Kootenay Livestock Association

Harlon Bradford

Glen Creelman

Andy MacDonald

Faye and Steve Street

Randy Reye and others

The Individual Ranchers

Anton Rossicky

Brader Charlesworth

Doris Riddell

George Biddlecombe

II ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS - Continued

The Fish & Wildlife Branch

Ray DeMarchi and Don Phelps

Peter Davidson

Forestry

John MacLeod, Range Resource Officer

Ministry of Agriculture

Mike Malmberg, Brian Baehr

There were many others who represented the wildlife interest groups. Without the valuable and willing assistance and supply of information, this task would have been much more difficulty and lengthy.

III SUMMARY

Co-operation between all parties is an essential part of any solution to the wildlife-rancher problem in the East Kootenay. This element has been lacking in the past. It must be encouraged in the future and only by continued dialogue can this happen.

The ranchers in the East Kootenay are an independent and self-reliant group of people. Yet, like most types of agriculture, ranching benefits from substantial subsidies.

Ranchers would like a reduction in wildlife numbers to reduce the competition for crown land forage and a wildlife damage fund, with no limit on the claims.

The wildife interest groups - hunters, guide-outfitters, photographers, naturalists and viewers of wildlife - request high levels of wildlife so they can continue to enjoy their recreational and business activities.

The commercial and business interests depend on visitors to improve the local economy. High numbers of wildlife encourage a high level of wildlife-related activities, both direct and indirect, and draw hunters and other tourists to the area.

How then does the government resolve the conflict?

As mentioned in the opening paragraph, co-operation is essential. So is compromise between the parties.

SUMMARY - Continued

Research is needed to answer questions and provide the basis for a long range strategy, such as:

condition of crown land range

numbers of cattle

use of agricultural land

numbers of wildlife

forest growth for lumber and pulp.

Short term remedies are also needed such as:

re-allocation of animal unit months

enhancement of crown range

regulated limited entry hunting seasons

enhanced wildlife habitat

The recommendations I have made address most of the problems and fall into three main areas.

1. Research - A research project is recommended to provide further information on crown range and the interaction of elk and cattle on forage growth.

2. Compensation - A wildlife damage fund is recommended to compensate ranchers for wildlife damage to forage crops. I urge the government to seriously consider this program with the limits on payment as stated in Recommendation #16.

SUMMARY - Continued

3. Recommendations to increase the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Fund and to increase species licenses will assist in improving Game Management and Wildlife Habitat.

To satisfy all demands is impossible. A compromise solution is the only one possible and what I have prepared may be close to that goal.

IV EVALUATION OF REPORTS

I have been requested to:

(1) "review all technical documents made available by the Minister of State for Thompson-Okanagan and the Kootenay and comment on the adequacy of the technical analysis."

(2) "Review management options identified by the East Kootenay Wildlife Damage Steering Committee for reducing damage to standing forage crops."

With respect to the first, I have reviewed fifteen documents containing 410 pages in total. The first report is dated June 23, 1971 and the last July 1988.

1 Wild Unqulate Requirements and Land Use conflicts in the Rocky Mountain Trench of the East Kootenay

by E.L. Berry, R.A. DeMarchi, and I.E. Milroy.

June 23, 1971

This report deals with:

- Wild ungulate requirements
- Land alienation, livestock grazing and forest succession.
- Industrial and urban expansion

These subjects are summarized and six recommendations are made dealing with protection of the resource base.

- Land use priorities
- A rural rehabilitation program to consolidate some ranch units
- A study to determine best mix wildlife-domestic stock
- A study to provide information on impact on vegetation type by stock and wildlife.
- Retard forest succession and manipulation.
- Education program for seed-free cleanliness of earth moving equipment.

The conclusion bears repeating because it reflects clearly one of today's problems.

"It seems fitting to underscore the theme of essential close co-operation between the Grazing Division of the Forest Service and the Fish & Wildlife Branch if an integrated land use plan in East Kootenay ranges is to be realized".

2 Land Use Options and Interim Management Recommendations
Steeples, Lost Creek and Point V Bar Ranches
by Pearce-Bowden Economic Consultants
March 19, 1975

This is a very detailed and complete report to the B.C. Land Commission. The recommendation for community grazing is no longer valid because Lost Creek and Steeples have since been sold.

Point V Bar is still in public ownership and the recommendation contained in the report should be considered in conjunction with a long range management plan for the region. Please see Recommendation #4.

A management plan is recommended in this report, also the comment that the properties not be used to encourage an increase in beef production at that time because of the importance of this property as an important Wildlife Winter Habitat.

3 East Kootenay Rancher Assessment Survey of Deer and Elk Damage to Livestock Operations

by R.A. DeMarchi and W.C. Bedford

June 1979.

This report attempts to assess the wildlife damage to standing or stored crops through a questionnaire delivered to 342 ranches.

A total of 188 questionnaires were returned, providing a good representative sample.

A total of 98 ranches reported losses by deer and/or elk.

Seventy ranches estimated the damage costs. 75 percent or 53 were $1,500 or less.

Total cost of damage was $98,895 in 1979 dollars. However, if one uses five percent inflation, the cost in 1988 dollars is $98,895 x 1.55 = $153,287.

This report contains some very pertinent data that can be applied today. Data and technical analysis cannot be questioned. However, the design of the questionnaire probably could be improved.

4 East Kootenay Range Issues

Public report No. 1

by Ombudsman of B.C.

October, 1981

This report mentions the Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) and comments on the difficulty in mid 70s with the way the plan was administered. Ranchers felt they were being squeezed out.

This report comes to a number of important conclusions that are worthy of notice today:

- Compensation is strongly recommended and should be followed up. (See recommendation #16)

The elimination of homesteader elk as recommended by Dr. Geist would not, in my opinion, solve the problem.

The method of eliminating Homesteader elk recommended by Dr. Geist (night shooting) would have only succeeded in making a difficult situation more intense.

Apparently no discussion took place with the various user groups before this report was published.

5 Reasons For Judgement

Diversified Holdings Ltd. - Plaintiff

Her Majesty the Queen - Defendant

by Mr. Justice Wallace

March, 1981

The plaintiff alleged that by feeding elk in the winter in the proximity of his ranch, the Fish & Wildlife Branch caused the elk to damage his feed stocks and other parts of his property (fences, etc.)

The Judge found the Crown not guilty, but ruled that each would pay their own costs.

Several important issues are raised in this case. They are:

(1) Sec. 2 (4)(a) SBC Chap. 57 of the Wildlife Act provides immunity to the government from liability arising out of damage claims caused by wildlife.

(2) The section does not, however, provide immunity from liability arising from wrongful acts of its servants while engaged in wildlife management.

Justice Wallace's commented:

"In the interest of developing the range lands for the cooperative use of wildlife and cattle, I would expect the Ministry would financially and otherwise, assist those ranchers particularly exposed to loss as a result of ministerial policy, to conserve and manage the herd, so that one rancher would not be bearing a greater than average portion of the cost of the loss incurred as a result of such policy."

Judge Wallace could not, of course, award damages but he did accept as factual Diversified Holdings' estimate in the amount of $30,365 plus pre judgment interest at fifteen percent from March 1, 1979 to March 9, 1982.

6 Proposal for Managing and Controlling Resident Elk on Private Lands

By James Hatter, Department of Agriculture

August 1983

This report is narrowly directed at controlling Homesteader or Resident elk in some areas.

The methods proposed may well be effective if indeed this is a problem. I suspect it is not.

I have no further comments, except to note that the recommendations have not been carried out.

7 & 8

Letters and reports by Ombudsman entitled "Preliminary Report"

7 "Wildlife Damage

8 "Wildlife Damage - George Biddlecombe"

In these two reports, the Ombudsman, Mr. Karl Friedmann, conducted a detailed investigation into the general problem and specifically on Mr. Biddlecombe's property.

The reports deal with a number of issues that relate more to inter-departmental problems than crop damages.

The solution, night shooting of problem elk as suggested by Dr. Geist, the consultant employed by the Ombudsman, is not practical and fortunately was not carried out. The removal of local or homesteader elk by his methods would have had a strong impact on an already fragile relationship between the wildlife interests and ranchers.

A very important factor is evident in all reports and letters from the Ombudsman's office, that is the matter of compensation or subsidy to the ranchers, to mitigate their losses and is one of his recommendations.

9 Wildlife Damage on Private Agricultural Land in the East Kootenay

Ministry of Environment

by G.K. Bowden

December 1985

This is a very well-prepared and documented report on most aspects of this problem.

Compensation or subsidy appears to be mentioned in the recommendations but is given as an alternative to the reduction in numbers of elk and deer.

Strong mention is made of reductions in wildlife numbers, both homesteader and migratory.

It is my opinion that the matter of recreational value translated to actual cash spent by users of wildlife was not seriously considered in this report.

The summary of compensation practices in other jurisdictions should be carefully considered.

10 Managing Elk by Selection Hunting in the East Kootenay
1970 to 1986
By R.A. DeMarchi, A.J. Wolterson-Strauss, W.J. Warkentin for
WAFWA and WDAFS joint conference
Salt Lake City, Utah
July 14, 1987

This is a very well-researched paper. It estimates the population of elk in 1986 at 28,000.

The only comment I can make on this paper and others is the fluctuation in estimated elk and deer numbers in the East Kootenay. This may be the result of hunter harvest, winter conditions or feed or range conditions. There does not appear to be a standard practice for the calculations of numbers of wild urgulates in this region.

11 Series of letters and veterinary reports concerning liver fluke in George Biddlecombe's cattle.
by. Dr. Macintyre, W.N. Harries, E.W. Gilchrist
January and February in 1985 and 1986

I am unable to comment on the technical aspects of these reports. The general impression one gets from the letters is that Mr. Biddlecombe suffered severe losses to his cattle as a result of liver fluke carried to his ranch by the elk.

The remedy is vaccination and that was done on his ranch. However, for whatever reasons, he still suffered losses.

It is also interesting to note that no mention of compensation was ever made to Mr. Biddlecombe for this particular type of loss.

12 Update of the Value of Wildlife to J. Walker, Director of the Wildlife Branch of the Ministry of Environment and Parks
By Roger Reid, Economics and Analysis Section, Planning & Assessment Branch, Ministry of Environment and Parks
February 2, 1988

This series of tables gives factual data on the revenue derived from wildlife participants - hunting and non-hunting - in the province. The table also differentiates between consumers (hunters) and non-consumers (naturalists, photographers, etc.) and separates the non-resident user as well.

Not one report going back to 1970 mentioned the value of hunting and other wildlife-related activities to the communities. No report attempted to evaluate the commercial advantages to the business community from these activities.

I also noted that Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce have been silent on this matter.

13 Update of Value of Wildlife Region 4 by Department of Environment
for Roy DeMarchi, Regional Biologist

This report lists the number of hunters, both resident and non-resident, that hunted a variety of species in Region 4.

Also provided was the percent of hunters that lived and hunted in Region 4 and the value of their activities to this region.

Non consumptive users were also listed, including photographers, hikers, etc.

The figures are broken down into direct and indirect expenditures. Base data was taken from surveys of people and their expenditures on a variety of goods and services.

I have not had the opportunity to discuss, in detail, the criteria and data used in these surveys. The amount of money spent appears very high, therefore, I believe the totals are somewhat exaggerated.

14 Evaluation of Elk numbers and distribution on private land in the East Kootenay.

by Keith Simpson for Ministry of Environment and Parks, Wildlife Branch, Cranbrook, B.C.

August 1988

The main purpose of this report was to determine the movement of the elk herd and to identify the animals that were causing most of the damage to forage crops.

Twenty-six elk were captured and fitted with radio collars. An elaborate system of tracking and plotting was used that effectively provided the information required.

The non-migratory elk stay at low elevation and apparently were thought to do most of the damage. This herd numbers about 280 animals and was reduced to that number by selective hunting practices.

Elaborate game counts were taken by flying the area on an established grid.

The report also suggests "some increase in hunting of non-migratory eld could be undertaken if it were possible to select mature cows" The remaining recommendations relate mainly to further research into the elk population.

Recommendations dealing with other matters such as compensation and fencing were left for additional information to be gathered.

15 Assessment of Elk an Deer Damage to Standing Forage Crops in the Cranbrook area of B.C.

By H.A. Kluge and W.C. Weber

For Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

July 1988

This excellent report is the first professional attempt to scientifically determine the amount of forage elk and deer consume, and to equate the amount to monetary loss.

Although the procedure is flawed in some part by (1) location of cages (2) extremely dry conditions (3) cattle being allowed to graze, it does provide a basis for evaluating the damage and would, with further study, provide a sound basis for compensation.

The ranch's selected are subject to heavy use by wildlife and therefore, may not be representative of all the ranches in the valley.

Further study will be necessary for a plan to be established on which compensation could be based.

Conclusions

The reader will note that I have not followed the exact instruction to comment on the "adequacy of the technical analysis". To do this properly would mean employing consultants in the professions of biology, agriculture, economics, veterinary medicine and forestry.

I do not believe that was the intent of the instruction. I have summarized the reports briefly to give the reader an insight into the problem.

It is apparent from the reports that this problem is one of long standing and is no closer to a satisfactory solution in 1988 then it was in 1970.

V THE RANCHERS

The ranching industry has a long history in the East Kootenay. Many ranches were established prior to the turn of the century and are still operated by a member of the original family.

Since these early days, many changes have taken place in agricultural economics and the land use in the trench area.

In my assessment of other reports, certain facts and statistics became evident and are of interest in this discussion.

In area 2 of the Regional District of East Kootenay, Census Div. A, B, C, the following statistics apply.

A	Total Farms	387
B	Total Capital Investment	$121,600,000
C	Farm Sales	$9,900,000
D	Days spent in off - farm work	41,440
E	X $100 per day	$4,144,000
F	Sales as % of Capital	.8%
G	Sales per farm	$25,581

Nearly 30% of the total farm income
(D + E) is derived from off - farm income

Which seems to indicate a ranching industry that requires the participants to provide considerable income from off-farm work.

The number of cattle in the area has stayed fairly constant at 26,000 head (Kluge & Weber 1988).

Improved farmland has increased from 34,802 acres in 1971 to 41,313 acres in 1986. At the present time, this includes approximately 19,000 acres of alfalfa.

A.U.M.'s or animal unit month's equivalent is cow and calf.

1954 - 39,107 A.U.M.'s

1964 - 72,896 A.U.M.'s

1974 - 49,936 A.U.M.'s

1980 - 41,198 A.U.M.'s

1988 - 35,000 A.U.M.'s

Clearly there has been a serious degradation of the forage area available to domestic stock and wildlife.

The Ministry of Forests and Lands has a number of programs in place to burn and seed, improve forage by spacing and forage seeding programs on logged areas of about 1,000 hectares per year and probably others that I am not aware of.

The range pasture available for cattle has diminished considerably. The ranchers have responded by more intensive cultivation and forage growth, which has enabled them to maintain about the same number of livestock.

Diminishing forage area, diminished productivity of forage plants due to overgrazing and forest succession are putting pressure on economic viability of ranch operation in the area.

This series of events has also caused wildlife to utilize the forage crops of the ranches to a much greater degree.

Greater demands on the fish and wildlife branch to satisfy the growing numbers of wildlife enthusiasts has resulted in an increase in wildlife numbers.

More competition has been created for a diminishing forage resource resulting in greater damage to forage for domestic livestock.

Ranchers are hard pressed to assume this added responsibility to provide forage for wildlife and as a consequence have asked for a compensation program.

The payment for wildlife damage to crops is not new in Canada. Programs already exist in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Several western states also have programs. These programs are all designed to assist the farmer but vary considerably in content (G.K. Bowden 1985).

Ranchers are not all opposed to wildlife on their property. Indeed, many say they enjoy the site of elk and deer. They also agree that a certain level of damage would be acceptable.

I would assume from my discussions with ranchers that this amount is about $1,000.

The people involved appear to enjoy the lifestyle they have chosen and have a strong desire to maintain a viable ranching industry in the area.

The ranching industry also enjoys a number of subsidies that provide considerable financial assistance. Most notable of these are:

1. Agricultural Land Development Assistance Program (A.L.D.A.) that provides farm improvement loans at six percent interest.

2. A.R.D.S.A. program - Commodity Enhancement projects - 87 - 88 in The Cranbrook District.

   Feed Storage Assistance $228,725.00

   Water Supply Drought Assistance $51,295.00

3. Farm Income and Crop Insurance

   Net Income East Kootenay

   1985 - $1,593,799.00

   1986 - $1,043,150.00

   1987 - $56,497.00

VI WILDLIFE

Wildlife resources in the Kootenay region are the most valuable in the province and are considered unique by most North Americans.

This resources consists of seven species of wild ungulates and eight species of carnivores and many species of lesser mammals and birds.

The Kootenay wildlife also provides a broad and strong economic impact on the business community which will be addressed later in the report.

This report, in part, addresses the damage by wildlife to forage crops. Therefore, it will be confined to elk and to a lesser extent, deer.

Forage loss is incurred at all times of the year, but primarily on cultivated crops - alfalfa, during late spring, summer, and fall. The damage can be extreme to slight, depending on topography, proximity of tree cover and numbers of wild game.

Elk and deer populations in the East Kootenay have fluctuated considerably over the past twenty years. Estimates compiled by the Department of the Environment indicate elk populations as follows:

1960	-	13,700
1970	-	4,950
1975	-	7,900
1978	-	10,000
1980	-	12,200
1985	-	24,000
1988	-	28,000

Non-migratory population of elk was at abut 500 - 600 (Bowden 1985). It was estimated at 281 in 1987 (Keith Simpson 1988).

The non-migratory elk or homesteader elk have received much attention and are being singled out as the problem animals in most reports. The elimination or reduction of this population was believed to be the solution to most of the problems. I do not agree with this conclusion.

The maximum number of homesteader elk was estimated at about 600 before a change in the hunting regulations reduced this number to the present population of 281.

Reports indicate an A.U.M. (cow and calf) equivalent to 2.8 elk. The Homesteader elk population is now estimated at 280. The equivalent number of cattle would be $\frac{280}{2.8} = 100$. A small number of animals hardly constitutes a problem in the East Kootenay.

This number, spread over most of the trench area, hardly constitutes a serious problem . If an isolated problem occurs, the fish and wildlife branch could remove those very few problem animals.

Factors such as loss of habitat, residential and industrial encroachment, roads, railroads, forest succession and probably others tend to change migratory patterns so animals that are migratory in 1987 may not follow the same pattern in 1988.

Deer populations at present are estimated to be 25,000 mule deer and 22,000 White Tail deer. Although most of the forage damage is done by elk some is attributed to both species of deer.

In summer and early fall, large number of white tail have been observed in alfalfa fields. Mule deer damage usually occurs in early spring.

The economic value of wildlife to the business community is considerable. Without this financial boost, estimated at $22,000,000 for region 4 alone (1986 stats), some businesses would not survive and others would be hard pressed to continue.

Any reduction in wildlife numbers would severely affect the economy of the region. To reduce wildlife numbers to 1980 levels would have a devastating effect on the business community.

VII GUIDES AND OUTFITTERS

The guide outfitter industry in the East Kootenay is thriving because of the wild game populations. Sportsmen come from around the world to hunt and photograph big game.

There are approximately 36 guide outfitters in the East Kootenay. Total for the province is about 320 so 11percent are in this area. They employ about 130 people as assistant guides and many more as cooks, wranglers and other help. The economic benefit to the Kootenay area from this industry can be illustrated by the fees charged non-resident hunters.

Figures are for a first class 10 day hunt and are in U.S. funds.

Mountain sheep	-	$10,000 - $12,500
Elk	-	$ 4,000
Elks and goat	-	$ 5,000 - $ 6,000

Guide outfitters presently pay a licence fee of $123 per year (recently increased from $100) and, in addition, pay lease fees on their buildings in the territory. These buildings are also subject to property taxes.

When guiding territories are sold and transferred to the new owners, he is only required to take out a new licence. No transfer fee is required.

Guide-outfitter territories in the East Kootenay have an approximate value of $500,000.

When a territory is sold, the new owner does not pay a tax to the B.C. Government. I am advised that a majority of these territories are sold to off-shore or American buyers.

The majority of hunters who employ the services of a Guide-Outfitter are non-resident.

It seems inappropriate for the B.C. Fish and Wildlife Branch to provide Wildlife Management for these non-residents without receiving some funds when a Guide-Outfitter territory is sold.

I have therefore, recommended a substantial increase in license fees and a transfer fee when a territory is sold.

VIII HUNTERS

Rod & Gun clubs, hunter associations, and groups that enjoy the outdoors are quite numerous in the Kootenay regions. Some of them are:

Cranbrook and District Rod & Gun Club

Canal Flats Wilderness Club

* East Kootenay Hunters Association

* B.C Wildlife Federation

Elkford Rod & Gun Club

* Fernie and District Rod & Gun Club

Fernie and District Archers and Bow Hunters

Golden and District Rod & Gun Club

Golden Archers

* Kimberley Wildlife and Wilderness Club

* Kootenay Bow Hunters

Lake Windermere Rod & Gun Club

* Southern B.C. Guides and Outfitters

Sparwood Wildlife Association

* Women for Wildlife

Those marked with * were contacted and interviewed during the course of this study.

It becomes very obvious that the number of people involved and interested in wildlife and wildlife habitat is much higher in the Kootenay region than any other area of the province.

Interviews with a number of club executives indicated that they are concerned about wildlife, not just for the purpose of hunting but also for non-consumptive uses, such as photography, hiking and viewing game.

The clubs have also volunteered many hours of work on projects ranging from statistical analysis for the fish and game branch to assisting in game licence checks and relocation of game.

The Ministry of Environment has calculated, using provincial statistics, that hunters living in region 4 spent some $15.7 million in that region during the 1986 hunting season.

It is my opinion after speaking to many people that the majority of hunters in the East Kootenay area, both residents of the area and B.C. hunters that come from other parts of the province, are quite willing to co-operate with East Kootenay ranchers in any way that would improve their situation.

The conflict between the hunters and ranchers is, in some cases, more perceived than real and is the result of some isolated incident. The frustration of the ranchers stems largely from their opinion that they are paying a much larger share than they should to maintain wildlife populations at high levels.

The hunting and wildlife groups unanimously believe that wildlife numbers should not be reduced but do not object to paying more for wildlife management and the enhancement of wildlife habitat.

IX NATURALISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

Several clubs in the area are formed for the purpose of pursuing game for aesthetic reasons only.

These include photography, or just observing. These non-consumptive users are increasing very rapidly throughout the province. More are active in the East Kootenay because of the abundance of game and the many more opportunities that are available.

These non-consumptive users spend several million dollars per year in pursuing their activities.

X COMMERCIAL INTERESTS

Wildlife in the East Kootenay contributes a great deal to the economy of the area. The following statistics are from provincial calculations made from surveys taken during the 1980s and have been updated as indicated.

Gross Expenditure - Resident Hunters 1986-87 in East Kootenay 1987
$18,922,270

Gross Expenditure - Non Resident Hunters 1986-87 in East Kootenay 1987
$3,115,080

Direct activities of non hunting participants - number of people involved was 33,500 and they spent $38,441,000 in the East and West Kootenay combined (no breakdown for East and West Kootenay).

An estimate was made of the economic value of wildlife in B.C. The Kootenay region was extracted from this report.

Hunting		Non Hunting		preservation
Resident - non resident		Indirect - direct		values
$11,958	$1,973	$4,738	$8,870	$7,120

(All Values in 000's)

(Roger Reid 1988)

Some 15 - 20,000 hunters and 35,000 non-consumptive users participate one way or another in wildlife related activities in the Kootenay area.

There are 36 guide-outfitters plus numerous sport shops, taxidermists, camera stores, outfitter suppliers, outdoor equipment suppliers, restaurants, motels, service stations and others who benefit from wildlife-related activities.

The importance to these businesses cannot be underestimated. To reduce this activity would severely impact the East Kootenay business community.

The ranching interests, as indicated in Chapter V contribute some $14,000,000 to the business community. I am advised that an amount is spent in Alberta mainly for feed grains. I have not been able to determine this amount.

It appears from the reports that the commercial interests in the East Kootenay benefit to a considerable extent from wildlife related activities and to a lesser extent from ranching activities.

IX DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The land usable for ranching and winter habitat for wildlife is confined to river valleys and the adjacent low elevation bench lands.

This area also contains most of the residential, commercial and industrial development. It also contains railroads, highways, hydro electric ponding and is subject to forest production.

The land not occupied by buildings, roads, flooding, etc. is then available for agriculture and in part wildlife habitat. The pressure on this diminishing resource becomes more intense as development, livestock, and wildlife increase.

Several factors have emerged from the studies done in the past that are worthy of discussion.

Domestic stock levels have been maintained at a relatively high level (about 26,000 head) yet the inventory of Crown land available for grazing has been reduced by many encroachments. Forest growth is the largest encroachment, followed closely by industry, hydro flooding, location of highways, railroads and mining activity.

Wildlife numbers have been allowed to increase by demand from wildlife interest groups. Wild game, following traditional migration patterns, find their routes and traditional wintering areas pre-empted or impaired by roads, ponding and other previously mentioned encroachments.

The only alternative for wild game when faced with a shortage of forage, either grazing or seral shrubland, is to enter and use improved farmland as winter habitat.

The ranchers then complain about damage to forage crops and fences and demand compensation or a reduction in wildlife numbers. In their submission of November 1988, they request both.

The Ministry of Agriculture, through studies it has done (specifically, Kluge & Weber, July 1988) have the capability of measuring the damage done to forage crops by wildlife. Detailed studies done in other areas (Wyoming Game & Fish Department, Demaree and Fagan, January 1988) clearly establish methods for measuring forage loss.

The remaining western provinces have compensation programs in place, as do most western states.

These programs vary from simple damage payments to very complex plans that are nothing more than administrative nightmares.

It becomes apparent that some firm decisions must be made. These decisions will not be received with great enthusiasm by all parties.

Some of the ranchers are experiencing considerable damage to forage crops from wildlife. They should not be expected to suffer financial loss of unequal proportions to other ranchers.

Therefore, if these people are expected to provide winter forage for wild game, they should get compensation.

Wildlife interest groups - hunters, guide-outfitters, and others who benefit directly from wildlife - should be permitted to pursue their activities with wildlife numbers such as they are at present, with no reduction in the wild game population.

To reduce wild game numbers to satisfy rancher demands would detract from the numbers of people in wildlife interest groups who pursue this recreational activity. The result would be a direct loss to the economy of the region and, specifically, its commercial interests, who would then be paying a indirect subsidy to the ranching industry.

The consumers of wildlife must be prepared to pay more for their recreation and as a consequence, I have recommended fee increases. This increase is modest when one considers such items as ski-lift tickets, golf green fees and even motion pictures.

A very key element in wildlife management is winter habitat and the corridors used to access these areas by wild game.

Preservation and management of these areas is clearly recognized in Section 4 of the Wildlife Act.

> "The Minister with the consent of the Lieutenant Governor in Council may by regulation, designate land under his administration as a wildlife management area and, on being so designated, the land shall be subject to prior rights granted."

As the East Kootenay contains the most diversified wild game populations in the province, the establishment of these wintering areas is essential.

Short term remedies are necessary and some are mentioned in this report. However, the importance of long range plans, with clearly defined goals and objectives developed by all interested parties and with solid commitment from the ministries involved, cannot be overemphasized.

XII RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That an overall regional plan be developed and include:
   a) allocation of forage for ultimate use by domestic and wild ungulates
   b) a long term strategy for land use in the East Kootenay for five to twenty years
   c) ranching interests, as participants in the planning as well as the Ministry of Forests and Lands, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and Ministry of Environment and Parks

2. That the existing C.R.M.PLANS be updated and utilized to prepare the overall plan and to allocate present and short term forage use.

3. That a process for monitoring and implementation be established. Strong emphasis is placed on implementation. All concerned ministries must be involved in the planning and implementation process.

4. That a research program be initiated to investigate the interactions among cattle production, elk production, forage quality and forage vigour and that the Ta-Ta Skookumchuck area be chosen as the research site, as recommended by Dr. M.D. Pitt in his report to the Research Branch of the Ministry of Forests, February 1982, "The interactions among grass, trees, elk and cattle". (see also Pearce-Bowden 1975)

5. That the Point V Bar ranch presently owned by the B.C. Government not be sold and become a part of the research site. Sale of the property can be evaluated when the research program is concluded.

6. That the numbers of wildlife and cattle remain at 1988 levels until the regional plan is complete and implemented. The numbers are (Kluge and Weber 1988) elk - 28,000, mule deer - 25,000, white tail deer - 22,000, and cattle - 26,000. The numbers fluctuate approximately 20% due to the sale of livestock and with wildlife, hunter harvest and winter kill.

7. That a program of range improvement be carried out immediately in accordance with a C.R.M.Plan as an interim measure to retard the deterioration of this valuable resource and recognizing the impact of present levels of ungulates in the area.

8. That land purchases be considered in some cases to reduce the wildlife - cattle conflict and to maintain highly productive wildlife winter habitat.

9. that the George Biddlecombe property be purchased and the owner be required to continue to farm the property in consultation with the Ministry of Environment and Parks, Fish and Wildlife Branch. The grazing permits in the Ta-Ta Skookumchuck area presently held by G. Biddlecombe should be incorporated into the recommended research project (see #4) with the Point V Ranch.

10. A) That the Doris Riddell ranch on the Bull River be investigated for purchase in 1989. This ranch controls grazing permits in the upper Bull River area and suffers high wildlife damage. It is also adjacent to the Pickering hills, the wintering area for the Bull River elk herd.

B) That the Anton Rossicky Ranch not be purchased. Mr. Rossicky wants a grazing permit for 700 A.U.M.'s preferably in the vicinity of his ranch. He also wants the 150 A.U.M.'s he now holds to continue with the ranch rather than terminating at his death. This matter should be investigated further by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Environment and Parks.

11. That the Species Licences Fees be increased as follows:

Species	Res.	Non Res.	Res.	Non Res.
	Old Scale		New Scale	
Black Bear	8.00	50.00	10.00	75.00
Caribou	20.00	120.00	25.00	180.00
Cougar	20.00	120.00	25.00	180.00
Deer (both)	8.00	60.00	10.00	90.00
Elk	20.00	120.00	25.00	180.00
Grizzly Bear	70.00	320.00	90.00	500.00
Moose	20.00	120.00	25.00	180.00
Mtn. Goat	30.00	130.00	40.00	200.00
Mtn. Sheep	50.00	300.00	65.00	1,000.00
Wolf	No Licence	25.00	--	40.00

Fees should be reviewed every two years and increased approximately 10%.

12. That the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Fund fees be increased from $3 to $5 in 1989 and $1 per year for five years starting in 1989 (at this rate, it will be $10.00 in 1994).

13. That the licence fee for a Guide-outfitter be increased from $123 to $1,000.

14. That a transfer fee of 10 percent of the purchase price of a Guide-outfitter territory be payable to the Ministry of Environment and Parks when a Guide-Outfitter territory licence is transferred to a new owner.

15. That revenue from all wildlife licence fees be specifically allocated to wildlife management and the enhancement of wildlife habitat.

16. That a wildlife damage fund be established, administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and funded to the extent of $100,000 equally by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of the Environment and Parks.

    The procedure will be as follows:

    A) Claimant files statement of wildlife damage with Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and pays a non-refundable fee of $500.

    B) Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Ministry of Environment and Parks make a joint assessment of the damage to pursue a long range solution if possible.

C) Damage to forage crops only is assessed and evaluated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, At year end, claims are totalled for the claimant ranch and are subject to:

1. a deduction of $1,000
2. a maximum payout of $5,000

Payment will be made in January - February of the following year.

D) When a claimant ranch repeats the claim in the following year and the damage experience is similar, the $500.00 deposit may be waived. The new claim is subject to:

1. a deduction of $1,000
2. a maximum payout of $5,000

E) A dispute settlement procedure will be established as follows:

1. Two single arbitrators will be selected jointly by the Wildlife Branch, Ministry of Agriculture and the East Kootenay Livestock Association.
2. In the event of a dispute on any matter concerning a claim one of the arbitrators would be called in to adjudicate the dispute. His decision will be final and binding on all parties. Costs of arbitration will be awarded by the arbitrator.

Note: Fence damage was considered and should be included only when the East Kootenay Livestock Association can agree on how the damage claims can be assessed.

17. That discussions between ministries of Forests and Lands, Agriculture and Fisheries and Environment and Parks and Ranchers be commenced immediately with a view to establishing the following wildlife management areas pursuant to Sec. 4 of the Wildlife Act.

1. Sheep Mountain/Wigwam/Galton Range
2. Wolf Creek - Sheep Creek (Premier Ridge)
3. Pickering Hills/Covalli North & South/Rosen Lake/Supply Creek
4. Peckams/Power Plant/Bull Mountain/Steeples
5. Findlay Creek/Dutch Creek

REPORTS COMMENTED ON IN THIS REPORT

Appendix One

1. Wild Ungulate Requirements and Land Use Conflicts in the Rocky Mountain Trench of the East Kootenay.
   by L. Berry, R.A. DeMarchi and I.E. Milroy
   June 23, 1971

2. Land Use Options and Interim Management Recommendations Steeples, Lost Creek and Point V Bar Ranches.
   by Pearce-Bowden Economic Consultants
   March 19, 1975

3. East Kootenay Rancher Assessment Surrey of Deer & Elk Damage to Livestock Operations
   by R.A. DeMarchi and
   W.C. Bedford
   June 1979

4. East Kootenay Range Issues
   Public report No. 1
   by Ombudsman of B.C.
   October 1981

6. Proposal For Managing and Controlling Resident Elk on Private Lands
by James Hatter
August 1983

7.& 8. Preliminary Report - 7. Wildlife Damage
8. Wildlife Damage, George Biddlecombe
by Ombudsman of B.C.

9. Wildlife Damage on Private Agricultural Land in the East Kootenay
by G.K. Bowden
December 1985

10. Managing Elk in the East Kootenay by Selection Hunting 1970 - 1986.
by R.A. DeMarchi, A.J. Wolterson, Strauss, and W.J. Workentin
for WAFWA and WDADS Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah
July 14, 1987

11. Series of letters and veterinary reports concerning Liver-Fluke in George Biddlecombe's cattle.
by Dr. Macintyre, W.N. Harris and E.W. Gilchrist
January to February 1985 and 1986

12. Update of the Value of Wildlife for the Wildlife Branch of the Ministry of Environment and Parks
by Roger Reid, Economics and Analysis Section, Ministry of Environment and Parks
february 2, 1988

13. Update of value of wildlife region 4
by Ministry of Environment and Parks

14. Evaluation of Elk Numbers and Distribution of Private Land in the East Kootenay
by Keith Simpson
August 1988

15. Assessment of Elk & Deer Damage to Standing Forage Crops in the Cranbrook Area of B.C.
by H.A. Kluge and W.C. Weber
July 1988

16. Evaluation of Damage Caused by Wildlife

    By John Demaree and Tim Fagan

    January 1981

    Wyoming Game & Fish Department

    September 1982

17. East Kootenay Problem Analysis: The Interactions Among Grass, Trees, Elk and Cattle.

    By Dr. M.D. Pitt

    February 1982

    For Research Branch Ministry of Forests

ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED

Appendix 2

East Kootenay Livestock Association

- Harlon Bradford
- Glen Creelman
- Andy MacDonald
- Faye & Steve Street
- Randy Reye and others

The Individual Ranchers

- Anton Rassicky
- Brader Charlesworth
- Doris Riddell
- George Biddlecombe

The Fish and Wildlife Branch

- Ray DeMarchi
- Don Phelps
- Peter Davidson

Ministry of Forests and Lands

- John MacLeod, Range Resource Officer

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

Mike Malmberg

Brian Baehr

East Kootenay Hunters Association

B.C. Wildlife Federation

Fernie and District Rod & Gun Club

Kimberley Wildlife & Wilderness Club

Kootenay Bow Hunters

Southern B.C. Guide & Outfitters

Women for Wildlife

WILDLIFE-LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE REGULATIONS

SASKATCHEWAN

Appendix 3

A. (1) During winters when wildlife mortality is likely, the minister may provide funds or, in his discretion, materials or feed, in any amount and manner that he considers reasonable in the circumstanes, to persons or organizations approved by the department, to meet all necessary expenses to ensure that a satisfactory program for wildlife is carried out.

(2) Payments for wildlife survival programs are to be made only if the program is first approved by the minister.

B. (1) The minister shall provide preventative assistance to an owner of agricultural produce in order to prevent damage to his agricultural produce by game or by any native wildlife species for which there is no open season established pursuant to The Wildlife Act during which it is lawful to hunt that species of wildlife where the owner:

a) has taken all reasonable steps to protect the agricultural produce from damage; and

b) any agricultural produce used in a program approved by a resource officer.

(C) Subject to subsections (3) and (8), the amount of preventative assistance payable under subsection (1) is equal to the amount required to reimburse the owner for the cost of:

a) any materials authorized by a resource officer to protect the agricultural produce from damage; and

b) any agricultural produce used in a program approved by a resource officer.

(D) The minister may, in his discretion, provide materials or agricultural produce described in clauses (2) a) and b) in lieu of providing preventative assistance.

(E) The minister may provide damage assistance to an owner of agricultural produce where damage to the agricultural produce by game or by any native wildlife species for which there is no open season established pursuant to The Wildlife Act during which it is lawful to hunt that species of wildlife continues despite the application of the preventative measures recommended by a resource officer.

(F) Subject to subsections (6) and (9), the total amount of damage assistance payable to claimant in each fiscal year of the department is:

a) the lessor of:

(i) $2,500 or

(ii) 75% of the damage assessed by a resource officer; or

b) where unharvested crops are damaged in the field, the lesser of:

(i) $2,500 or

(ii) 75% of the damage assessed by a resource officer to a maximum of $50 per acre.

(G) No payment of damage is to be made pursuant to subsection (4):

a) where the damage is assessed at an amount equal to or less than $100;

b) for damage to agricultural produce, where the damage is the result of insufficient surveillance by the owner of the agricultural produce leading to an undue delay in notifying a resource officer of damage or impending damage in time to institute preventative techniques;

c) where the owner has not complied to the best of his ability with all recommendations made by a resource officer to reduce wildlife damage;

d) for damage to hay bales that have not been collected from the field and stacked;

e) for damage to standing grain that is unharvested to poor farming practices;

f) for damage to unprotected grain piles or grain that is stored in a negligent fashion or in structures that are in a state of disrepair; or

g) for damage to livestock or agricultural produce occurring w'thin a provincial park or in the Northern Provincial Forest.

(H) After a claim has been paid, instructions for measures to be taken to prevent future damage may be provided by a resource officer, and no further damage assistance is payable unless the specified preventative measures have been taken.

(I) Calculation of claims for damage are based on market prices at the time of loss, but payments for gain damaged in the field are based upon the value of the grain at the time the crop is harvested.

(J) Individual payments made under this section for the amount of all claims received for damage may be prorated at the minister's discretion in proportion to the amount of money appropriated for the program in each fiscal year.

(K) Persons obtaining assistance pursuant to these regulation are responsible for providing any labour necessary to properly utilize and maintain preventative materials or to operate wildlife survival programs.

WILDLIFE DAMAGE POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR ELK AND DEER DAMAGE

ALBERTA

Appendix 4

Legislation and Regulations - Section 8 of the Wildlife Act authorizes the Minister to establish a Wildlife Damage Fund; money for this may be raised through a surcharge on hunting licenses or other licenses and permits issued under the Act.

Compensation for Damage - YES. Crops covered include wheat, oats, barley, flax, rye, field peas, buckwheat, rapeseed, grasses, clovers, alfalfa, and field corn for seed or fodder, whether standing on lying in swath. The maximum amount of compensation is $75.00 per acre or 75% of the commercial value of the crop, whichever is less. NOT included are orchard and nursery crops, public grazing land, unimproved pasture, or harvested and stored crops. Proposals were made about 1985 to expand the program to include these types of crops, but they have not been adopted.

Financial Assistance for Fencing - YES (for harvested or stored crops only, not for crops growing in the field). On properties with chronic damage problems, the Fish & Wildlife Division will provide up to three rolls of page-wire fencing (100 m per roll) or snow fencing, with labour and construction costs being provided by the farm operator. This program is mainly intended to protect haystacks and other stored crops.

Estimated Cost of Damage - Losses to ungulates very variable (depending largely on severity of winter), but varying from about $100,000 to an extreme of $2,000,000 per winter.

Amount of Payouts - Between 1978 and 1983, an average of $290,000 paid per year in response to an average of about 500 complaints (ranging from 411 and 611 complaints). Data for more recent years not immediately available.

Source of Funding - Main source of funding for Wildlife Damage Fund is a surcharge on hunting licences (currently $6.00), supplemented from general revenue when necessary. However, in severe damage years, claims may be prorated, so that grower may receive only 30% to 35% of crop value in the compensation. Most of the Fund goes toward alleviation of waterfowl damage to crops, but it is also used to pay for ungulate damage.

Procedures for Reporting and Assessing Damage - Damage claims must be reported to the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation, and a $25 filing gee is required (refundable if the claim is paid). The crop must be inspected by an adjuster, who makes a visual estimate of the crop loss, often based on pooling an estimate from several subsamples. Further details are explained in the attached section from the AHCIC Adjusters' Manual.

Other Methods Used to Reduce Damage - The Fish and Wildlife Division also uses diversionary feeding (especially in severe winters); scaring techniques, such as electronic scarer using a microwave detector and flashing lights and sirens, which was developed by Division staff; and trapping relocation of elk from high-damage areas. The last method is used strictly for elk, as a means of restocking areas of Alberta where elk populations are considered too low. About 300 elk have been transferred in the last three winters or so.

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